

Hillary and I send our deepest condolences to his wonderful wife, Jean, to Russ, Robin, Tom, and the rest of his family, to the other families whose loved ones perished, and to the people of Missouri, whom he loved so much and served so well.

Statement on Signing the Children's Health Act of 2000

October 17, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law the Children's Health Act of 2000. This bipartisan legislation builds on my administration's longstanding commitment to improve the health and well-being of our Nation's children. I am particularly pleased that this legislation provides new authority to expand research for the treatment of chronic and acute diseases affecting children, improve the safety of child care centers, and ensure safe and quality mental health treatment services. This important legislation also addresses the critical need for substance abuse and mental health services, especially for our Nation's youth, through the reauthorization of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), supporting State and community efforts to reduce youth drug use, and improving research and treatment services. In addition, the legislation will allow us to strengthen our efforts to curtail the emerging use of the drugs methamphetamine and Ecstasy, which imperil the health and safety of our nation's young people.

I want to pay special tribute to my administration's number one advocate for children, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Hillary has called the Nation's attention to the special health needs of children through her work on children's health insurance coverage, asthma, pediatric labeling, juvenile diabetes, and so much more. She has led the administration's effort to improve access to health care for children, has fought hard for improving the quality and safety of child care, and has done more than anyone to improve the lives of millions of our Nation's children.

NOTE: H.R. 4365, approved October 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-310.

Statement on Signing the Children's Health Act of 2000

October 17, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 4365, the "Children's Health Act of 2000." This legislation authorizes expanded research and services for a wide variety of childhood and prenatal health problems, reauthorizes programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and addresses the problem of substance abuse and associated violence.

This Act calls on HHS to continue providing services to children whose lives have been affected by diseases such as diabetes, asthma, lead poisoning, cancer, and autism, and to expand research in these and other areas such as birth defects and brain injuries so that we can better understand their causes and develop treatments. I am pleased that H.R. 4365 authorizes a new research effort, a national long-term study of environmental influences on children's health and development, that will provide critical information about environmental, social, and economic factors that affect children's health. We hope that with increased understanding of children's diseases, we will get closer to ultimately finding cures or preventing these conditions from ever occurring. I am gratified to see that this bill's focus on children's health addresses several priority areas identified by the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children.

I am also pleased that H.R. 4365 authorizes new funds to improve the health and safety of children in child care. Available, affordable, safe, high-quality child care is a concern for any working parent. I have committed my Administration to achieving this goal, and today we are making substantial strides forward.

As a Nation, we continue to face the challenges of curbing substance abuse, especially among our youth, preventing youth violence, and addressing the mental health needs of our citizens. For this reason, I am especially proud of the comprehensive manner in which this legislation addresses illegal drug